A Forgiving God and a Judgemental God:The Question of Religion in the Later Nishida

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Preamble

It is well known that Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 discusses the question of religion in a concentrated fashion in "The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview" ("Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan" 場所的論理と宗教的世界観), an essay written in his final year. His treatment of religion in this essay has often been discussed in connection with, for example, the Jōdo Shin sect of Japanese Buddhism or the *agapē* of Christianity.[i] The focus of such studies is a God who saves even evildoers, a God who forgives and loves all people, and this is discussed in relation to, for example, the Jōdo Shin view that evildoers are the prime target of Amida's compassion. Such discussions tend to attach importance to a God who saves and forgives people.[ii]

In "The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview" there is a passage that could be read as if Nishida himself were critical of a judgemental God *qua* transcendent God:

> But I do not consider a God who cannot fully enter into self-negation, a God who does not contain within himself true self-negation, to be the true absolute. He is a judgemental God, not a God of absolute salvation; he is a transcendent and sovereign God, but not a fully immanent God of absolute love.[iii] (11: 458)

But if one reads this passage carefully, one realizes that Nishida is not negating a judgemental God, but is only saying that one cannot speak of a true God by alluding only to his aspect as a judgemental God. In fact, having stated that "being an utterly unique, individual, and volitional self, in an inversely corresponding manner externally our self stands over against the absolute, which utterly transcends our self and stands over against our self, and internally too, and in an inversely corresponding manner, stands over against the absolute, which utterly transcends our self and stands over against our self" (11: 434–435), Nishida goes on to speak in positive terms of a God who gives commands and passes judgement on those who disobey his commands: "In the former [i.e., external] direction, our self comes in contact with an absolute command, which is a self-expression of the absolute, and we have no choice but to obey it by utterly negating ourselves. Those who obey it live, those who disobey it are cast into the eternal fire." (11: 435)

Furthermore, Nishida also considered morality to be founded on religion: "What is called religion does not think of God as the supreme principle from the position of knowledge, nor does it recognize the position of God as a requirement from the position of morals. But even so it is not based simply on a subjective mystical experience. As was said above, it is the position that lies at the basis of knowledge and morals." (11: 137) Therefore, religion is discussed by Nishida not just in connection with salvation, but also as something that requires moral practice.

In other words, Nishida considered God to have two aspects, namely, the aspect of a judge and the aspect of a forgiver. But this does not mean simply that God possesses two different aspects. To anticipate Nishida's conclusion,

it is precisely because God gives commands and passes judgement that he forgives and saves. At the same time, it is precisely because God forgives and saves that he gives commands and passes judgement. The acts of giving commands and passing judgement and the acts of forgiving and saving constitute a single state of affairs.

In light of the above points, in the following I wish to clarify the relationship between God's forgiveness and his commands, paying particular attention to the aspect of a God who gives commands and passes judgement, an aspect that has been overlooked in past research. In section 1, prior to discussing the relationship between God and ourselves, I outline Nishida's thinking regarding the mode of being of humans. In section 2, I discuss the mode of being of God that may be deduced from the mode of being of humans. Lastly, in section 3, I discuss the relationship between God and humans and thereby clarify the character of God's judgement and forgiveness.[iv]

1. What Sort of Entity Is the Self?

Before discussing the forgiving God and the judgemental God, we must first consider the nature of the self that encounters this God. In this section, I shall briefly consider the nature of the self, focusing on its relationship with God.

Nishida characterizes the self in the following manner. If the essence of the self is determined by objective entities (or "beings of the grammatical subject" in Nishida's terminology), then it is merely an instinctive entity governed by rules and objects (11: 400). But for the self to be dissolved into what is external to it, it would mean that "there is no self there" (11: 401).

But nor, Nishida argues, can the essence of the self be considered to be reason.[v] When the self is considered to be autonomous and rational, "our self is nothing but the mere self-determination of the universal, which is no one's self and could be anyone's self. It is merely abstract being which has no individuality and no reality." (11: 401) Reason is something general that applies to anyone who possesses reason, and it may be thought of as universal and unchanging. Therefore, "reason is not subject to birth and death. There too life is being thought of as something external." (11: 421) When basing oneself on reason, life cannot be thought of as something that is destined to die. Rather, the self is being defined by something external in the form of the rules of reason. According to Nishida, "The practising self is not mere reason. The self exists where there is the possibility of breaking laws." (11: 401) So long as humans are defined by laws, they will be forever defined by the general. Instead, the essence of humans ought to be thought of as something that possesses the freedom of being able to break laws.[vi]

Of course, to think of humans as beings with the potential to break laws does not mean to think of them as simply wilful beings, for as long as one breaks laws in accordance with one's instincts and desires, one will end up being a self governed by what is external, as noted above. Nishida accordingly envisages a mode of being for the self that is free while heeding inevitability.[vii]

Nishida writes as follows of the self:

> Our personalistic self, free and also internally inevitable, exists where we express the world in ourselves in the contradictory self-identity of the internal and the external and determine ourselves as single focal points of the world, that is, where we are creative. Our personalistic self exists only in the absolutely contradictorily self-identical world, which is absolute nothingness and yet determines itself. (11: 402)

What does this mean?

When stating that "we express the world in ourselves," Nishida is dealing with the creative aspect of the personalistic self in the relationship obtaining between the personalistic self and the world. We engage in self-expression. Nishida's "self-expression" means to give expression to the self externally by producing things that

express the self. At the same time, this self-expression is not merely an individual event and is also an event that occurs in the world. Furthermore, the production of something in the world means that something new is added to the world and that the world assumes a new form. In the sense that the world's mode of being and our self-expression are interconnected, it is said that "we express the world in ourselves."

To "determine ourselves as single focal points of the world" concerns the aspect of the workings of the world in the relationship obtaining between the personalistic self and the world. The self is determined by the world's mode of being. We are, moreover, determined as "single focal points." That is to say, we do not reflect the world in its entirety and are determined as no more than single focal points subject to the constraints of time and place. The self decides on its mode of being even as it accepts the circumstances of the time and place in which it lives.[viii]

To sum up, the personalistic self, while subject to the constraints of time and place, also creates a new world through its self-expression. It is this dynamism of the world that Nishida describes as "creative," and it is the constraints of time and place that correspond to the elements said to be "internally inevitable," while the self is said to be "free" insofar that it creates the world through self-expression.

But this world is not merely a world of arbitrary freedom. Nishida writes as follows of the proclivities and directionality of the world and the self.

> The world, being contradictorily self-identical and as the self-determination of the absolute present, has its focal point within itself and forms itself with this dynamic focal point at its centre. This gives the world its own order. As the singular many of this world, each as a single focal point of the world, the self expresses the world in itself and also has its own direction in accordance with the direction of the self-formative focal point of the world. (11: 378)

What is important here is that the focal point of the world is a "dynamic focal point" and that order is found therein. According to Nishida, the world moves through history, and its movement is a movement that possesses a definite order moving from the past to the future. However, what needs to be noted here is the "self-determination of the absolute present." History must be a self-determination in the present such that, while influenced by the past and moving towards a goal in the future, the present simultaneously determines the present. In other words, the present is not causally determined by the past, nor is it teleologically determined by the future. This means that while accepting the past as a task to be dealt with, it revamps history as it moves towards the future. In more concrete terms, this has the following implications. In the present, the past exists as a given. Furthermore, this past is not a mere given, but a given that is filled with tasks. The fact that the past is filled with tasks means that we have been tasked with negating the given past and revamping it into a new reality. In other words, the past is given as something to be negated. Likewise, the future does not exist as a fixed goal, but one that becomes visible through the tasks given in each present moment. Thus, the order and directionality of history do not signify a single current or a single order, and accepting tasks from the past as they appear in the present, one revamps the current circumstances while moving towards the future. In addition, fresh tasks emerge in the newly created circumstances, and whenever this occurs, a new future is aimed at.[ix]

Furthermore, the personalistic self is deemed to engage in self-expression in the midst of this directionality of history. This is what is meant when it says in the passage quoted above that "the self expresses the world in itself and also has its own direction in accordance with the direction of the self-formative focal point of the world." The personalistic self accepts the history of the past as tasks, negates the mode of being of the past world, and revamps the world. By accepting tasks and creating a new future, we engage in self-expression. Nishida describes this mode of being of the world as follows: "This world is a world of the freedom of inevitability and the inevitability of freedom. Only in this world is it possible to speak of the Sollen of the self." (11: 379) Insofar that the personalistic

self is following the directionality of a world moving from the past to the future, it is moving in an inevitable manner. But insofar that it negates the past and creates a new future, it possesses a freedom that is not shackled by the world's past mode of being.

In this fashion, the personalistic self accepts the past through negation as something filled with tasks. There is inevitability insofar that the self is burdened with tasks from the past, and there is freedom insofar that it is able to create new things without being shackled by the past. In this case, acceptance through negation becomes the basis of both freedom and inevitability. Therefore, in the next section let us consider the questions of death as negation and the absolute.

2. Negation and the Absolute

As we saw in the previous section, the self is not some sort of reason that never dies, but something that lives in the midst of birth and death. Consequently, the self, differentiated from mere reason, is characterized as something that knows of its own death. Nishida accordingly writes as follows: "Thus, to know our eternal death is the fundamental reason for our existence, for only he who knows his own eternal death truly knows that he is an individual. He alone is a true individual, a true personality. What does not die is not something one-off."[x] (11: 395) What needs to be noted here is that the adjective "eternal" has been added to one's own "death." Once it dies, the self is never reborn. The death of the self means that the self dies for eternity. By knowing of one's death, one knows of one's unique one-off life and "becomes truly self-aware for the first time" (11: 395). By realizing that one will never be reborn and one's life will never be repeated, one "truly knows that he is an individual" and "becomes truly self-aware" as "a true personality." In knowing of our eternal death we realize that we are living a precious and irreplaceable life.[xi] Nishida further states that "when the relative stands over against the absolute, that is death" (11: 396). Self-awareness of one's death becomes possible by "standing over against the absolute." What sort of situation, then, is meant by "standing over against the absolute"?

According to Nishida, "Needless to say, the absolute transcends opposites, but that which merely transcends opposites is not anything but merely nothing. A God who does not create anything is a powerless God; he is not God. Of course, if it stands over against something in an objective way, it is relative and not absolute." (11: 396–397) In other words, the absolute is not merely something that transcends opposites, nor does it stand in opposition to something relative as its object. Accordingly, "The absolute is truly absolute in standing over against nothingness. By standing over against absolute nothingness it is absolute being." (11: 397) It does not stand over against, or face, anything as its object. It stands over against only "absolute nothingness." But the absolute cannot be said to stand over against nothingness if that nothingness is merely standing in opposition to the absolute as its object. Therefore, "mere nothingness is not something that stands over against the self. What stands over against the self must negate the self." (11: 397) This nothingness does not signify a state of merely being nothing, and is a nothingness such that the self is negated by standing over against it. It is precisely because it manifests as the power that negates the self that this nothingness can be said to stand over against the self as nothingness. But as is indicated by the statement that "so long as there is something outside the self that negates it, something that stands over against the self, the self is not absolute" (11: 397), if there is something outside the self that negates it, it is relative and not absolute. That which negates the self must also be the self itself. This means that "the absolute must contain absolute self-negation within itself" (11: 397). That which negates the self is not outside the self but within the self. This means that one negates oneself, which also corresponds to the state of "standing over against that which negates the self," and so one stands over against oneself, the self-negating self. In this fashion, to "stand over against absolute nothingness" is to stand over against one's own self-negating self, and "this must mean that the self becomes absolute nothingness" (11: 397). As a result of oneself becoming absolute nothingness, "nothingness stands over against nothingness itself" (11:

397). In other words, the absolute is not merely something that transcends opposites, nor does it stand over against the relative; the absolute stands over against the absolute itself, and to stand over against oneself in this way means that one becomes absolute nothingness and absolutely negates oneself.

To become this kind of absolute nothingness and negate oneself absolutely means that "the true absolute exists where it completely turns itself over into the relative. The true general one has its existence in the true singular many." (11: 398) In other words, the true absolute negates and transforms itself and exists as that which establishes the relative singular many, and to this extent it is the absolute. The state in which "the relative stands over against the absolute" is conceived of as a state in which the absolute negates itself and stands over against its self-negation, and the relative is established within this self-negation of the absolute. Therefore, "A God who is merely transcendent and self-satisfied is not a true God. In one respect he must also be thoroughly characterized by *kenosis*. The truly dialectical God is a God who is utterly transcendent and utterly immanent, utterly immanent and utterly transcendent. As such, he may be described as the true absolute." (11: 399) The absolute is not a relative singularity and must be something that transcends this, but nor is it something that is merely transcendent. It exists within absolute self-negation, such as is referred to as *kenosis* (self-emptying), establishes the relative singular many, and is immanently alive therein. "It is said that God created the world out of love, but God's absolute love must be essential to God as his absolute self-negation; it is not an *opus ad extra*" (11: 399). God absolutely negates himself and becomes the relative, and our lives are lived on account of this love shown by God. These workings of God are workings intrinsic to the absolute, which also means that a God who is not a God of love cannot be said to be the true absolute.

Through this self-negation by God our self confronts absolute negation. Existentially speaking, this absolute negation means to know one's own nothingness. To know one's own nothingness means that one will be lost in perpetuity through death and will never be reborn. Ethically speaking, it means that the self accepts the given as that which ought to be designated as the absolute and is driven to revamp the world anew. Through self-negation, God is a God of love who establishes our self. But at the same time, as absolute negation, God is also an entity that absolutely negates us. Let us consider in the next section how God is a God of love but also manifests as that which negates us.

3. Two Inverse Correspondences: Forgiveness and Judgement

Nishida defines the relationship between God and human beings as an inverse correspondence (gyakutaiō 逆対応).[xii] Nishida's use of the term "inverse correspondence" stems from his mathematical theories,[xiii] but here it expresses the relationship between the relative and the absolute as mediated by negation.[xiv] However, it should be noted that apart from "inverse" correspondence there is no such thing as, for example, "true" correspondence. As was seen in the previous section, the relationship between the absolute and the relative becomes possible only through the self-negation of the absolute, and in this sense a relationship not mediated by negation is in principle impossible.[xv] That being so, what sort of actual relationship is this relationship mediated by negation?

As was seen at the start of this essay, Nishida defines the self as something that encounters the absolute both externally and internally.

> Being an utterly unique, individual, and volitional self, in an inversely corresponding manner externally our self stands over against the absolute, which utterly transcends our self and stands over against our self, and internally too, and in an inversely corresponding manner, stands over against the absolute, which utterly transcends our self and stands over against our self. In the former [i.e., external] direction, our self comes in contact with an absolute command, which is a self-expression of the absolute, and we have no choice but to obey it by utterly negating ourselves. Those who obey it live, those who disobey it are cast into the eternal

> fire. In the latter [i.e., internal] direction, on the other hand, the absolute thoroughly embraces our self; it persistently pursues and embraces our self, which persistently disobeys [the absolute] and flees [from the absolute]. That is, [the absolute] is boundless compassion. (11: 434–435)

What is clear from this passage is that God has two modes of being, namely, that of a God who embraces us even as we disobey him and that of a God who casts into eternal damnation those who disobey his absolute commands. Of these two aspects, that of an embracing God negates himself, as was seen in the previous section, and establishes the relative personalistic self. This is a God who persistently stands beside humans who disobey him and continues to support them to the end.

But what should not be forgotten is that this God is also a judgemental God, a God who casts into eternal damnation those who disobey him. He is both a God who embraces and affirms us and a God who utterly negates us. Let us consider this point in a little more detail.

Nishida writes: "Our human history has been, if stated in religious terms, built by means of what may be described as the words of God, and our *Sollen in* practice lies in continuing to build it by this means" (10: 60). Elsewhere he also writes: "Each single fact not only possesses the world's self-aware significance but also encompasses infinite *Sollen* as the self-expression of the absolute one" (10: 495). As was seen earlier, the past appears as something to be negated and presents us with tasks. While calling these tasks "infinite *Sollen*," Nishida rephrases this by referring to it as "the self-expression of the absolute one" and "the words of God." That which presents us with the past as tasks, as something to be negated, is the self-expression of the absolute one in the form of the words of God.[xvi]

As was explained above, our self is established through God's absolute negation. It is precisely because absolute negation lies at the root of the self that we are aware of death and exist as a unique self. At the same time, it is precisely because the self is established by absolute negation that we are able to exist as a free self unshackled by past causes and future goals. Because the self is established through negation, it becomes possible for the self to negate both past and future and mould itself. In this way the self becomes able to accept past causes not as unshakeable givens but as tasks to be negated. How, then, does it actually accept the tasks?

What is important first of all is that, even though Nishida speaks of "the words of God," this does not at all mean that God descends before our eyes and addresses us with some specific words. Reality manifests as something that entails tasks, and this represents a self-expression of the absolute one and the words of God. A God who appears only as absolute negation would be absolute nothingness and would never appear as objective being. But at the same time God is also the agapē, or absolute love, that establishes our self. Nishida describes as follows the task presented by this absolute love:

> By standing over against the utterly transcendent one, we become true personalities. And the fact that the self is the self by standing over against the transcendent one means at the same time that I stand over against my neighbours with *agapē*. (9: 216)

These words remind one of scenes in which Jesus Christ preached love for our neighbours, especially the following words: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34) But what needs to be noted here is that when Jesus spoke of love for our neighbours, he was speaking of outsiders such as Samaritans who are not usually considered to be neighbours (Luke 10:25–37), and he meant, "Love your enemies,… and pray for them which…persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). We are required to love those who, when considered from the position of our self, cannot possibly be described as neighbours.

Nishida similarly writes: "We are a personalistic self by loving neighbours like ourselves in imitation of God's

agapē" (6: 424). To "stand over against my neighbours with *agapē*" means to "imitate God's *agapē*." God's *agapē* was to establish us through his self-negation. Therefore, to stand over against our neighbours with *agapē* in imitation of God must mean to bring out the best in others through our own self-negation. Likewise, to accept the past as a task means to realize that the historical schema continuing from the past, which defines us, is violently pushing our neighbours into the position of enemies and outsiders, and to bring out the best in our neighbours with love. It is required of us that we build relationships with others by becoming aware of and negating the schema of the past, which violently assumes others to be outsiders and enemies.

In this fashion it becomes clear that the judgemental God and the forgiving God represent a single state of affairs. Nishida writes: "… *agapē* and Sollen are not mutually opposed to each other. Moral *Sollen* must, on the contrary, be founded on *agapē*." (10: 115) Our *Sollen* is something that, like God's *agapē*, ought to bring out the best in others through our self-negation. It could be said that the task thrust upon us by God is to negate our past mode of being, which has equated others with outsiders and enemies, and to build opportunities for meeting with others in a true sense. It is precisely because God is a forgiving God that we are led to love others. But at the same time he is also a judgemental God who demands an awareness of our violence towards others and persistently compels us to negate the self.

Concluding Remarks

In the above it has become clear that the forgiving God and the judgemental God represent a single state of affairs as a God who demands that we "stand over against neighbours with *agapē*." Not only is the self completely loved with *agapē*, but we are compelled to negate the self in the same way as *agapē* does. The loving God who establishes our self is also a judgemental God who demands that we negate the self and turn towards others.

In section 1, I discussed the question of freedom and inevitability in the self. I clarified a relationship in which freedom is inevitability, such that one conforms with the inevitability of history insofar that one accepts the past as a task and moves towards resolving it, but simultaneously acquires the freedom to be able to negate the past. In section 2, I discussed how God's self-negation lies at the root of this negation. Lastly, in section 3 I discussed how God's self-negation thrusts upon us the demand that we stand over against our neighbours with *agapē*. We are required to negate the past mode of being that regarded others as outsiders and meet with others through self-negation.

God is both a God who embraces and forgives us even as we flee from him, and also a God who, being a God of *agapē*, persistently demands self-negation of us.

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Notes

i. For discussions on inverse correspondence with a focus on absolute love and compassion from the standpoint of the Jōdo

Shin sect, focusing on Amida's name (*myōgō* 名号), see Ōmine 1994 and Hase 1996. In addition, Takeda 1991 discusses Nishida's views on religion from the standpoint of the Jōdo Shin sect. In connection with Christianity, see Kawamura 1988 and Asami 2000.

ii. For example, Takemura Makio writes as follows about Nishida's "God" in relation to Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙. Arguing that the essence of Daisetsu's "Japanese spirituality" is "most certainly not the discrimination that saves if good and punishes if evil, but an agency that saves unconditionally, regardless of good or evil" (Takemura 2002: 252), he writes that similarly Nishida's "God" "is a God of absolute love, a God of infinite compassion who embraces our disobedient and fleeing self, even to the extent of pursuing us anywhere" (ibid.: 253). The aspect of a God of love and compassion is stressed, and the question of a judgemental God is not taken up.

iii. Here and below, quotations from Nishida's works are based on the following edition: Shimomura Toratarō 下村寅太郎 et al., eds., *Nishida Kitarō zenshū* 西田幾多郎全集 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1965–66). The location of a quotation is indicated by the volume number followed by the page number.

iv. Because this essay deals with the question of religion in Nishida's later philosophy, there is no space to discuss his religious philosophy around the time when he wrote *Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究 (*An Inquiry into the Good*). For a critical examination of his treatment of religion around the time when he wrote *Zen no kenkyū*, see Riesenhuber 2014, especially chapter 14, "Junsui keiken no shūkyōteki sokumen" 純粋経験の宗教的側面 [Religious aspects of pure experience]. For a discussion of religion in *Zen no kenkyū* in connection with science, see Matsumaru 2013: 16–26. Likewise, for a critical examination of Nishida's treatment of the religious around the time when he was developing his ideas on the world of "place" and wisdom, which cannot be considered here, see Tanaka 1993, especially chapter 6, "Shūkyōteki sekai no hihan to basho no ronri" 宗教的世界の批判と場所の論理 [Criticism of the religious world and the logic of place]. In addition, for a chronological treatment of Nishida's views on religion from his early period until his final years, see Kosaka 1994.

v. Here "reason" refers not to "true reason," which operates by mediating in Nishida's absolute negation, but to reason in the sense of ordinary understanding. "True reason" is discussed in detail in Shirai 2014. See also Mutai 2001, especially "Nishida tetsugaku ni okeru shūkyōteki na mono" 西田哲学における宗教的なもの [The religious in Nishida's philosophy], for treatment of the questions of reason, the individual who is subject to birth and death, and inverse determination in Nishida's philosophy.

vi. For a comprehensive study of Nishida's views on freedom, see Taguchi 2006. Taguchi points out that there can be found already in Nishida's *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* 自覚に於ける直観と反省 (*Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*) passages that recognize in connection with freedom a positive meaning in evil.

vii. On the questions of wilfulness, freedom, and inevitability in Nishida's philosophy, see Itabashi 2008.

viii. Lack of space prevents me from discussing in detail the relationship between the "self" and the "world" in expression, but I have discussed it in detail in Shirai 2006 & 2013. Further, for a discussion of expression with a focus on "reflecting," see Okada 2001.

ix. Lack of space prevents me from going into details here, but for a detailed discussion of the tasks that appear in the historical world, see Shirai 2007. On the relationship between tasks and the absolute, see Sugimoto 2013: 204–205.

x. Of course, as is indicated by Nishida when he writes, "To know one's own nothingness is not to merely judge oneself to be nothing" (11: 395–396), to know of one's own death does not mean merely to possess the knowledge that one will die. As is discussed below, it means to accept negation through practice.

xi. As regards the question of death in Nishida's philosophy, it is almost always considered in the sense of an absolute turnabout for the self, as is typified by Matsumaru 2013: 90–91. But as is stated by Asami Hiroshi (2009: 282), Nishida's treatment of death should be understood as taking into its purview one's own actual death.

xii. Representative of the various studies of "inverse correspondence" are Kosaka 1994 & 1995, Ueda 2002, and Takemura 2002. Mention may also be made of Mutai Risaku as one of the first people to have taken note of Nishida's term "inverse correspondence" (see Mutai 2001, especially "Gyakugentei no kanō ni tsuite" 逆限定の可能について [On the possibilities of inverse determination], first published in 1948). As well, mention may be made of Akizuki Ryōmin, who supports Mutai's focus on inverse correspondence in the form of inverse determination and emphasizes that the quintessence of Nishida's philosophy appears in inverse correspondence (Akizuki 1996, especially part 1, chapter 4, "Nishida tetsugaku no kihon shisō" 西田哲学の基本思想 [The fundamental ideas of Nishida philosophy], first published in 1957).

xiii. On Nishida's mathematical theories in his final years, see Matsumaru 2005. It has also been pointed out that Nishida received the hint for "inverse correspondence" from Mutai's term "place-correspondence" (*bashoteki taiō* 場所的対応; Mutai 1996 [1944]) (see Kosaka 1994).

xiv. The term “inverse correspondence” initially expressed the relationship between one individual entity and another, and it first appears in the article “The Philosophical Foundations of Mathematics” (“Sūgaku no tetsugakuteki kisozuke” 数学の哲学的基礎附け), which was written before “The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview.” In this article Nishida writes as follows:

> But in the form that determines itself in a contradictorily self-identical manner, two individual entities must at root mutually possess to the very end the significance of inverse determination, must possess the significance of mutual negation. The form must be in one respect self-negatory. Further, the form that determines itself self-affirmatively as the negation of negation first corresponds one-to-one to itself. A form that determines itself can, so to speak, be posited where the two individual entities form an inverse correspondence. (11: 243)

Here “inverse correspondence” is used in connection with the relationship between two individual entities. Also used here is the term “one-to-one correspondence,” which forms a counterpart to “inverse correspondence.” Elsewhere in “The Philosophical Foundations of Mathematics” Nishida writes that “it must be supposed that the singular many on the determined surface forms an inverse correspondence of plus and minus” (11: 244) and “a world of power can be posited from the inverse correspondence between two individual entities” (11: 244). Here too “inverse correspondence” is used in reference to the relationship between two individual entities mediated by negation. (The words “inverse-correspondence–like” [*gyakutaiōteki* 逆対応的] and “inverse-correspondence–ness” [*gyakutaiōsei* 逆対応性] are also used with respect to the negative relationship between two individual entities [11: 248–249].) But in “The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview,” written after “The Philosophical Foundations of Mathematics,” this term comes to be used primarily to indicate the relationship between the absolute and the relative. Because the term “inverse correspondence” first appeared in the context of mathematical set theory, in “The Philosophical Foundations of Mathematics” it was still being used as a counterpart to “one-to-one correspondence” to indicate the correspondence between two individual entities, but as its religious dimensions deepened, it evolved into a term expressing the relationship between the absolute and the relative, a relationship in which it could never form a counterpart to “one-to-one correspondence.” On the origins of the term “inverse correspondence,” see also Matsumaru 2005. “Inverse correspondence” is also used to express the relationship of the absolute to itself, but since the relationship between the absolute and the relative also implies that the absolute relates to itself through negation, it represents a single state of affairs. On this point see Takemura 2002, especially part 2, chapter 3, “Gyakutaiō no shūkyō tetsugaku” 逆対応の宗教哲学 [The religious philosophy of inverse correspondence]. For a concise summary of these various relationships involved in inverse correspondence, see Kosaka 1994.

xv. It has been suggested (e.g., Maeda 2006) that Nishida’s term “inverse correspondence” contains elements of a response to Takizawa Katsumi’s 滝澤克己 *Nishida tetsugaku no konpon mondai* 西田哲学の根本問題 [Fundamental questions in Nishida’s philosophy] (1936). The term itself appears in Nishida’s final article “The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview” (1945) and the slightly earlier “Philosophical Foundations of Mathematics” (1945), but this motif of “from God to man, not from man to God” had already been discussed in connection with agapē in *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* 無の自覚的限定 (*The Self-conscious Determination of Nothingness* [1931]). Further, in “Benshōhōteki ippansha to shite no sekai” 弁証法的一般者としての世界 [The world as dialectical universal] (1934) he wrote: “There is no road from us to the absolute. God is an absolutely hidden God. No matter how far we go in the direction of seeing things through action, we do not come in contact with God.” (7: 427) Further, in “Zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu” 絶対矛盾的自己同一 [Absolutely contradictory self-identity] (1939) he wrote: “And the fact that we thus come in contact with self-contradiction at the root of ourselves is not due to ourselves but must be the call of the absolute” (9: 216). Likewise, in “Zushikiteki setsumei” 図式的説明 [A schematic explanation] (1939), included in vol. 3 of *Tetsugaku ronbunshū* 哲学論文集 [Collected essays on philosophy], we find the statement that “there is no road from human beings to God” (9: 334). Although it is an issue that ties in with Takizawa’s “irreversible” (*fukagyaku* 不可逆), in view of the fact that such statements are found already in Nishida’s “Benshōhōteki ippansha to shite no sekai,” which predates Takizawa’s *Nishida tetsugaku no konpon mondai*, and continue to appear thereafter, Nishida’s interest in the motif of “from God to man, not from man to God” may be considered to have arisen not through Takizawa, but through his confrontation with dialectical theology. For details on the background to the origins of the term “inverse correspondence,” see Kosaka 1994.

xvi. Lack of space prevents me from going into details here, but for a detailed discussion of *Sollen* as God’s *logos*, see Shirai 2008.